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# Faculty Senate - Executive Council September 3, 2013 Meeting Minutes

Faculty Senate

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Faculty Senate Executive Council  
MINUTES  
September 3, 2013

Present: Guoxun Chen, Phillip Daves, Jennifer Fowler, David Golden, Joanne Hall, Don Hodges, Bruce MacLennan, Bonnie Ownley, Michael Palenchar, Lloyd Rhinehart, Tina Shepardson, Steve Thomas

Guest: Jimmy Cheek

## **I. CALL TO ORDER**

D. Golden called the meeting to order at 3:36 p.m., after establishing that a quorum was present.

## **II. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REPORTS**

### Chancellor's Report (J. Cheek)

- J. Cheek indicated that he would not be able to attend the Faculty Senate Retreat on September 5, 2013, due to a conflict with the UT Board of Trustees summer workshop on September 5-6. He briefly mentioned some of the information that will be in his message to Governor Haslam, and his address on the State of the University on September 16, 2013.
  - Randy Boyd, CEO of Radio Systems Corporation (PetSafe) is leading the Governor's "Drive to 55" initiative.
  - UT has had a significant economic impact in the State of Tennessee through education of engineering and business graduates. Fifty one percent of our engineering graduates and 62% of business graduates remain in the state for employment.
  - For the third year, UT has been able to give raises to employees, including raises associated with promotion.
  - This year the freshman class is the largest we have had with 4,300. The larger number of students is due to an increase in the number of out-of-state and international students enrolled (13%), which has enabled us to increase student diversity. Cheek will visit China with P. Wood (Assoc. Provost and Director, Center for International Education) to continue to explore opportunities for recruitment of international students.
  - Due to donor generosity, we have two new buildings open on campus this semester: the John Tickle Engineering Building and the Natalie L. Haslam Music Center. We also have 38 acres of recreational sports fields on Sutherland Ave.
  - J. Cheek indicated that he was very pleased that Coach B. Jones has shown strong support for academic progress of athletes and has communicated this to his football players; in turn the players achieved their highest collective GPA (2.8) last spring semester.
  - As a point of awareness, T. Shepardson indicated that there was anecdotal evidence that LGBT graduates were leaving the state of Tennessee due to the political climate. Cheek reiterated his support for diversity and stated that he expected that R. Hall, the new Vice-Chancellor for Diversity, will provide good leadership in that position.
  - UT's current retention rate is 86% and the graduation rate is 66%. Cheek expects the graduate rate to increase to 70% by next year. However, he emphasized that we need to continue our efforts to increase the graduation rate to 75% in order to meet the goal of Top 25.
  - The 15-4 Tuition Model, which was implemented this semester, does not appear to have had a negative impact on attracting students.

### Provost's Report (S. Martin)

Provost Martin was unable to attend and no report was available.

#### President's Report (D. Golden)

- *Vincent Anfara, Jr.*: A moment of silence will be held for former (2011-2012) President of the Faculty Senate, Vincent Anfara, at the September 16<sup>th</sup> Faculty Senate Meeting.
- *Faculty Senate Committees*: Assignments to committees have not been completed due to membership complexities in the by-laws. In some cases, by-laws changes are needed to reflect changes in positions at UT. For example, the Director for Women's Athletics is no longer a position at UT; however, this individual is a required member of the Athletics Committee. D. Golden will continue to work on committee assignments.
- *Faculty Senate Retreat*. The retreat is scheduled for September 5, from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM, in the Shiloh Room at the University Center. The theme will be "Did you Know That?" and featured speakers will include Provost S. Martin, A. Blamey (Director of Safety, Environment and Education Center), D. Irvin (Associate Vice Chancellor, Facilities Services), M. Nichols (Vice Chancellor for Communications), J. Scogin (Senior Associate Athletic Director and Assistant Provost, Thornton Athletics Student Life Center), K. Alldredge (Director of Undergraduate Admissions), and R. Hall (Vice Chancellor for Diversity).

### **III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

D. Golden asked for corrections or additions to the minutes of the Executive Council meeting of April 22, 2013. No changes were suggested and the minutes were approved with 11 ayes and 1 abstention.

### **IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

#### Non-Tenure-Track Issues Committee (D. Golden)

A resolution to establish this committee was presented at the May 6, 2013, Faculty Senate meeting. A vote on the resolution will be taken at the September 16, 2013 Faculty Senate meeting. Discussion followed on membership of the committee in regards to the number of non-tenure-track and tenure-track members. D. Golden indicated that he could not appoint committee members until the establishment of the committee is approved by the Faculty Senate. A by-laws change will be needed to include the new committee and enable the committee chair to serve on the Executive Council.

#### Romantic and/or Sexual Relationships between Faculty and Students (J. Fowler/P. Daves)

J. Fowler has agreed to chair the Faculty Affairs Committee. P. Daves will remain on the committee to serve as a consultant. The Faculty Affairs Committee was asked to seek additional input on this issue from the Commission for Women before presenting it to the Faculty Senate. T. Shepardson suggested that input also be sought from the Commission for Blacks and the Commission for LGBT people. The Faculty Affairs Committee will move forward with these suggestions before bringing the resolution forward to the Faculty Senate.

#### Academic Freedom Issue (P. Daves)

The Faculty Affairs Committee requested that the UT Board of Trustees review and revise their policy on academic freedom protections. Recent court rulings have limited protection of freedom of speech for university personnel at public universities while in the workplace. The UT Board of Trustees revised their policy, but the Faculty Affairs Committee thought that the revised policy should be strengthened and will continue to work on this issue.

#### Promotion of Lecturers (J. Fowler/P. Daves)

The additions and revisions to the *Faculty Handbook* and the *Manual for Faculty Evaluation* have been reviewed, revised, and approved by UT General Counsel. P. Daves reported that the changes made by General Counsel were organizational, rather than substantive, and did improve the clarity of the documents. The revisions will go back to the Faculty Affairs Committee for approval,

meanwhile, Daves requested that the Executive Council consider the document for approval, subject to approval of the Faculty Affairs Committee, prior to presentation to the Faculty Senate at the October meeting. Daves moved to approve the revised changes to the *Faculty Handbook* and *Manual for Faculty Evaluation* on promotion of lecturers, and S. Thomas provided a second to the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

## **V. REPORTS OF SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

There were no reports from special committees.

## **VI. REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES**

Graduate Council (D. Hodges)

Review of the minutes for the Graduate Council meetings of February 28, 2013, and April 4, 2013, would be deferred until the September 16, 2013, Faculty Senate meeting.

Undergraduate Council (J. Levin)

There was no report.

## **VII. NEW BUSINESS**

By-Laws – Information Officer (Article IV, Sec. 5) (D. Golden)

D. Golden suggested that the title of Information Officer be changed to Communication Officer. Currently there is no Faculty Senate Newsletter and S. Winston maintains and updates the website. The role of this person would be to disseminate information to the Faculty Senate and to the Faculty at large. J. Hall suggested that dissemination of information should probably be broader than that. Discussion followed on use of a one-way list serv to disseminate information, or a two-way list serv moderated by the Communication Officer. Hall suggested that the Communication Officer should consult with the Office of Information Technology on use of SharePoint sites for this purpose. Golden indicated that the current Information Officer (S. Ohnesorg) could continue to serve in the role of Communication Officer.

Policies, Procedures and Plans – UTK Safety Manual (D. Golden)

M. Smith (Director, Environmental Health and Safety) asked whether the Faculty Senate or one of the Committees would be interested in reviewing a revision of the *UTK Safety Manual*. He provided a list of topics covered in the *Manual*. Since these topics require specialized knowledge it was decided by consensus that a review of the document could best be done by the various university compliance committees, whose members have expertise in these topics.

Retention Review Policy (D. Golden)

The deans have requested that a departmental faculty vote no longer be mandatory for annual review of pre-tenure faculty. The deans indicated that a vote is causing undue angst for pre-tenure faculty. This would involve a change in the *Manual for Faculty Evaluation*. Discussion followed that the “vote” gave faculty a voice on these important decisions. “No” votes must be accompanied by a reason. J. Hall stated that someone must be retained before they can be tenured and she thought that departmental faculty took this responsibility very seriously. There was general agreement that the “vote” can signal corrective action to pre-tenure faculty when needed. T. Shepardson suggested that lack of a faculty vote may give department heads too much authority in this matter, which can be difficult if the relation between faculty and department head is not satisfactory. Hall requested that the Council obtain more rationale from the deans on this issue.

Additional Business (T. Shepardson)

- T. Shepardson received a document from faculty in Arts and Sciences who are concerned about the UTIA oil and gas construction initiative at Cumberland Forest. They raised questions about

the quality of research and the lack of review by experts of the UTIA proposal. They asked for a statement by the Faculty Senate on this issue. More specifically, they asked that the UT Board of Trustees delay decision until they hear concerns by faculty, students and alumni. They asked that a Research Council Task Force be established to consider the issue. Currently, UTIA plans to present their proposal at the next meeting of the UT Board of Trustees. D. Golden stated that he thought that the upcoming presentation before the UT Board of Trustees was informational. He also said that more information can be found at

<http://Ag.Tennessee.edu/gasandoil/Pages>, and that individuals can submit questions to the website. P. Daves stated that he would like to hear more details about the UTIA proposal. Shepardson moved to investigate the possibility of holding a town hall meeting on this topic, sponsored by the Faculty Senate. Daves seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by voice vote. Golden will contact UTIA to determine if they are willing to participate in a town hall meeting.

- T. Shepardson stated that individuals had expressed concern that the primary metric for faculty tenure and promotion was extramural funding received. They raised the question of whether this was appropriate in the current climate of highly competitive funding, with many programs at less than 10% funding. They also suggested that it was important to be honest with new faculty and explain that research dollars are the primary metric for evaluation. No action was taken.

#### **VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 5:18 p.m.